

In this booklet:

P.1, Karl Marx, Value, Price and Profit, 1865, excerpt

P 2, V. I. Lenin, 1902, What Is To Be Done? (excerpt)

P.12, Extracts from the South African Communist Party Constitution

Value, Price and Profit

Karl Marx, 1865, to the leaders of the International Working Men's Association

From the last part of the last chapter (Chapter 14):

These few hints will suffice to show that the very development of modern industry must progressively turn the scale in favour of the capitalist against the working man, and that consequently the general tendency of capitalistic production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages, or to push the *value of labour* more or less to its *minimum limit*. Such being the tendency of *things* in this system, is this saying that the working class ought to renounce their resistance against the encroachments of capital, and abandon their attempts at making the best of the occasional chances for their temporary improvement? If they did, they would be degraded to one level mass of broken wretches past salvation. I think I have shown that their struggles for the standard of wages are incidents inseparable from the whole wages system, that in 99 cases out of 100 their efforts at raising wages are only efforts at maintaining the given value of labour, and that the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities. By cowardly giving way in their everyday conflict with capital, they would certainly disqualify themselves for the initiating of any larger movement.

At the same time, and quite apart from the general servitude involved in the wages system, the working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the causes of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them, the present system simultaneously engenders the *material conditions* and the *social forms* necessary for an economical reconstruction of society. Instead of the *conservative* motto, "*A fair day's wage for a fair day's work!*" they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword, "*Abolition of the wages system!*"

Chapter 4

C. Organisation of Workers and Organisation of Revolutionaries

It is only natural to expect that for a Social-Democrat whose conception of the political struggle coincides with the conception of the "economic struggle against the employers and the government", the "organisation of revolutionaries" will more or less coincide with the "organisation of workers". This, in fact, is what actually happens; so that when we speak of organisation, we literally speak in different tongues. I vividly recall, for example, a conversation I once had with a fairly consistent Economist, with whom I had not been previously acquainted. We were discussing the pamphlet, *Who Will Bring About the Political Revolution?* and were soon of a mind that its principal defect was its ignoring of the question of organisation. We had begun to assume full agreement between us; but, as the conversation proceeded, it became evident that we were talking of different things. My interlocutor accused the author of ignoring strike funds, mutual benefit societies, etc., whereas I had in mind an organisation of revolutionaries as an essential factor in "bringing about" the political revolution. As soon as the disagreement became clear, there was hardly, as I remember, a single question of principle upon which I was in agreement with the Economist!

What was the source of our disagreement? It was the fact that on questions both of organisation and of politics the Economists are forever lapsing from Social-Democracy into trade-unionism. The political struggle of Social-Democracy is far more extensive and complex than the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government. Similarly (indeed for that reason), the organisation of the revolutionary Social-Democratic Party must inevitably be of *a kind different* from the organisation of the workers designed for this struggle. The workers' organisation must in the first place be a trade union organisation; secondly, it must be as broad as possible; and thirdly, it must be as public as conditions will allow (here, and further on, of course, I refer only to absolutist Russia). On the other hand, the organisation of the revolutionaries must consist first and foremost of people who make revolutionary activity their profession (for which reason I speak of the organisation of *revolutionaries*, meaning revolutionary Social-Democrats). In view of this common characteristic of the members of such an organisation, *all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals*, not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession, in both categories, *must be effaced*. Such an organisation must perforce not be very extensive and must be as secret as possible. Let us examine this threefold distinction.

In countries where political liberty exists the distinction between a trade union and a political organisation is clear enough, as is the distinction between trade unions and

Social-Democracy. The relations between the latter and the former will naturally vary in each country according to historical, legal, and other conditions; they may be more or less close, complex, etc. (in our opinion they should be as close and as little complicated as possible); but there can be no question in free countries of the organisation of trade unions coinciding with the organisation of the Social-Democratic Party. In Russia, however, the yoke of the autocracy appears at first glance to obliterate all distinctions between the Social-Democratic organisation and the workers' associations, since *all* workers' associations and *all* study circles are prohibited, and since the principal manifestation and weapon of the workers' economic struggle -- the strike -- is regarded as a criminal (and sometimes even as a political!) offence. Conditions in our country, therefore, on the one hand, strongly "impel" the workers engaged in economic struggle to concern themselves with political questions, and, on the other, they "impel" Social-Democrats to confound trade-unionism with Social-Democracy (and our Krichevskys, Martynovs, and Co., while diligently discussing the first kind of "impulsion", fail to notice the second). Indeed, picture to yourselves people who are immersed ninety-nine per cent in "the economic struggle against the employers and the government". Some of them will never, during the *entire* course of their activity (from four to six months), be impelled to think of the need for a more complex organisation of revolutionaries. Others, perhaps, will come across the fairly widely distributed Bernsteinian literature, from which they will become convinced of the profound importance of the forward movement of "the drab everyday struggle". Still others will be carried away, perhaps, by the seductive idea of showing the world a new example of "close and organic contact with the proletarian struggle" -- contact between the trade union and the Social Democratic movements. Such people may argue that the later a country enters the arena of capitalism and, consequently, of the working-class movement, the more the socialists in that country may take part in, and support, the trade union movement, and the less the reason for the existence of non-Social-Democratic trade unions. So far the argument is fully correct; unfortunately, however, some go beyond that and dream of a complete fusion of Social-Democracy with trade-unionism. We shall soon see, from the example of the Rules of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle, what a harmful effect such dreams have upon our plans of organisation.

The workers' organisations for the economic struggle should be trade union organisations. Every Social-Democratic worker should as far as possible assist and actively work in these organisations. But, while this is true, it is certainly not in our interest to demand that only Social-Democrats should be eligible for membership in the "trade" unions, since that would only narrow the scope of our influence upon the masses. Let every worker who understands the need to unite for the struggle against the employers and the government join the trade unions. The very aim of the trade unions would be impossible of achievement, if they did not unite all who have attained at least this elementary degree of understanding, if they were not very *broad* organisations. The broader these organisations, the broader will be our influence over them -- an influence due, not only to the "spontaneous" development

of the economic struggle, but to the direct and conscious effort of the socialist trade union members to influence their comrades. But a broad organisation cannot apply methods of strict secrecy (since this demands far greater training than is required for the economic struggle). How is the contradiction between the need for a large membership and the need for strictly secret methods to be reconciled? How are we to make the trade unions as public as possible? Generally speaking, there can be only two ways to this end: either the trade unions become legalised (in some countries this preceded the legalisation of the socialist and political unions), or the organisation is kept secret, but so "free" and amorphous, *lose* [German "loose" --Ed] as the Germans say, that the need for secret methods becomes almost negligible as far as the bulk of the members is concerned.

The legalisation of non-socialist and non-political labour unions in Russia has begun, and there is no doubt that every advance made by our rapidly growing Social-Democratic working-class movement will multiply and encourage attempts at legalisation -- attempts proceeding for the most part from supporters of the existing order, but partly also from the workers themselves and from liberal intellectuals. The banner of legality has already been hoisted by the Vasilyevs and the Zubatovs. Support has been promised and rendered by the Ozerovs and the Wormses, and followers of the new tendency are now to be found among the workers. Henceforth, we cannot but reckon with this tendency. How we are to reckon with it, on this there can be no two opinions among Social-Democrats. We must steadfastly expose any part played in this movement by the Zubatovs and the Vasilyevs, the gendarmes and the priests, and explain their real intentions to the workers. We must also expose all the conciliatory, "harmonious" notes that will be heard in the speeches of liberal politicians at legal meetings of the workers, irrespective of whether the speeches are motivated by an earnest conviction of the desirability of peaceful class collaboration, by a desire to curry favour with the powers that be, or whether they are simply the result of clumsiness. Lastly, we must warn the workers against the traps often set by the police, who at such open meetings and permitted societies spy out the "fiery ones" and try to make use of legal organisations to plant their *agents provocateurs* in the illegal organisations.

Doing all this does not at all mean forgetting that *in the long run* the legalisation of the working-class movement will be, to our advantage, and not to that of the Zubatovs. On the contrary, it is precisely our campaign of exposure that will help us to separate the tares from the wheat. What the tares are, we have already indicated. By the wheat we mean attracting the attention of ever larger numbers, including the most backward sections, of the workers to social and political questions, and freeing ourselves, the revolutionaries, from functions that are essentially legal (the distribution of legal books, mutual aid, etc.), the development of which will inevitably provide us with an increasing quantity of material for agitation. In this sense, we may, and should, say to the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs: Keep at it, gentlemen, do your best! Whenever you place a trap in the path of the workers (either by way of direct

provocation, or by the "honest" demoralisation of the workers with the aid of "Struivism") we will see to it that you are exposed. But whenever you take a real step forward, though it be the most "timid zigzag", we will say: Please continue! And the only step that can be a real step forward is a real, if small, extension of the workers' field of action. Every such extension will be to our advantage and will help to hasten the advent of legal societies of the kind in which it will not be *agents provocateurs* who are detecting socialists, but socialists who are gaining adherents. In a word, our task is to fight the tares. It is not our business to grow wheat in flower-pots. By pulling up the tares, we clear the soil for the wheat. And while the Afanasy Ivanoviches and Pulkheria Ivanovnas are tending their flower-pot crops, we must prepare the reapers, not only to cut down the tares of today, but to reap the wheat of tomorrow. [5]

Thus, we cannot by means of legalisation *solve* the problem of creating a trade union organisation that will be as little secret and as extensive as possible (but we should be extremely glad if the Zubatovs and the Ozerovs disclosed to us even a partial opportunity for such a solution -- to this end, however, *we must* strenuously combat them). There remain secret trade union organisations, and we must give all possible assistance to the workers who (as we definitely know) are adopting this course. Trade union organisations, not only can be of tremendous value in developing and consolidating the economic struggle, but can also become a very important auxiliary to political agitation and revolutionary organisation. In order to achieve this purpose, and in order to guide the nascent trade union movement in the channels desired by Social-Democracy, we must first understand clearly the absurdity of the plan of organisation the St. Petersburg Economists have been nursing for nearly five years. That plan is set forth in the "Rules for a Workers' Mutual Benefit Fund" of July 1897 ("*Listok*" *Rabotnika*, No. 9-10, p. 46, taken from *Rabochaya Mysl*, No. 1), as well as in the "Rules for a Trade Union Workers' Organisation" of October 1900 (special leaflet printed in St. Petersburg and referred to in *Iskra*, No. 1). Both these sets of rules have one main shortcoming: they set up the broad workers' organisation in a rigidly specified structure and confound it with the organisation of revolutionaries. Let us take the last-mentioned set of rules, since it is drawn up in greater detail. The body consists of *fifty-two* paragraphs. Twenty-three deal with the structure, the method of functioning, and the competence of the "workers' circles", which are to be organised in every factory ("a maximum of ten persons") and which elect "central (factory) groups". "The central group," says paragraph 2, "observes all that goes on in its factory or workshop and keeps a record of events." "The central group presents to subscribers a monthly financial account" (par. 17), etc. Ten paragraphs are devoted to the "district organisation", and nineteen to the highly complex interconnection between the Committee of the Workers' Organisation and the Committee of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle (elected representatives of each district and of the "executive groups" -- "groups of propagandists, groups for maintaining contact with the provinces, and with the organisation abroad, groups for managing stores; publications, and funds").

Social-Democracy = "executive groups" in relation to the economic struggle of the workers! It would be difficult to show more glaringly how the Economists' ideas deviate from Social-Democracy to trade-unionism, and how alien to them is any idea that a Social-Democrat must concern himself first and foremost with an organisation of revolutionaries capable of guiding the *entire* proletarian struggle for emancipation. To talk of "the political emancipation of the working class" and of the struggle against "tsarist despotism", and at the same time to draft rules like these, means to have no idea whatsoever of the real political tasks of Social-Democracy. Not one of the fifty or so paragraphs reveals even a glimmer of understanding that it is necessary to conduct the widest possible political agitation among the masses, an agitation highlighting every aspect of Russian absolutism and the specific features of the various social classes in Russia. Rules like these are of no use even for the achievement of trade union, let alone political, aims, since trade unions are organised by *trades*, of which no mention is made.

But most characteristic, perhaps, is the amazing top-heaviness of the whole "system", which attempts to bind each single factory and its "committee" by a permanent string of uniform and ludicrously petty rules and a three-stage system of election. Hemmed in by the narrow outlook of Economism, the mind is lost in details that positively reek of red tape and bureaucracy. In practice, of course, three-fourths of the clauses are never applied; on the other hand, a "secret" organisation of this kind, with its central group in each factory, makes it very easy for the gendarmes to carry out raids on a vast scale. The Polish comrades have passed through a similar phase in their movement, with everybody enthusiastic about the extensive organisation of workers' benefit funds; but they very quickly abandoned this idea when they saw that such organisations only provided rich harvests for the gendarmes. If we have in mind broad workers' organisations, and not widespread arrests, if we do not want to provide satisfaction to the gendarmes, we must see to it that these organisations remain without any rigid formal structure. But will they be able to function in that case?

Let us see what the functions are: ". . . To observe all that goes on in the factory and keep a record of events" (par. 2 of the Rules). Do we really require a formally established group for this purpose? Could not the purpose be better served by correspondence conducted in the illegal papers without the setting up of special groups? ". . . To lead the struggles of the workers for the improvement of their workshop conditions" (par. 3). This, too, requires no set organisational form. Any sensible agitator can in the course of ordinary conversation gather what the demands of the workers are and transmit them to a narrow -- not a broad -- organisation of revolutionaries for expression in a leaflet. "... To organise a fund ... to which subscriptions of two kopeks per ruble [of wages earned] should be made" (par. 9) -- and then to present to subscribers a monthly financial account (par. 17), to expel members who fail to pay their contributions (par. 10), and so forth. Why, this is a very paradise for the police; for nothing would be easier for them than to penetrate

into such a secrecy of a "central factory fund", confiscate the money, and arrest the best people. Would it not be simpler to issue one-kopek or two-kopek coupons bearing the official stamp of a well-known (very narrow and very secret) organisation, or to make collections without coupons of any kind and to print reports in a certain agreed code in an illegal paper? The object would thereby be attained, but it would be a hundred times more difficult for the gendarmes to pick up clues.

I could go on analysing the Rules, but I think that what has been said will suffice. A small, compact core of the most reliable, experienced, and hardened workers, with responsible representatives in the principal districts and connected by all the rules of strict secrecy with the organisation of revolutionaries, can, with the widest support of the masses and without any formal organisation, perform *all* the functions of a trade union organisation, in a manner, moreover, desirable to Social-Democracy. Only in this way can we secure the *consolidation* and development of a *Social-Democratic* trade union movement, despite all the gendarmes.

It may be objected that an organisation which is so *lose* that it is not even definitely formed, and which has not even an enrolled and registered membership, cannot be called an organisation at all. Perhaps so. Not the name is important. What is important is that this "organisation without members" shall do everything that is required, and from the very outset ensure a solid connection between our future trade unions and socialism. Only an incorrigible utopian would have a *broad* organisation of workers, with elections, reports, universal suffrage, etc., under the autocracy.

The moral to be drawn from this is simple. If we begin with the solid foundation of a strong organisation of revolutionaries, we can ensure the stability of the movement as a whole and carry out the aims both of Social-Democracy and of trade unions proper. If, however, we begin with a broad workers' organisation, which is supposedly most "accessible" to the masses (but which is actually most accessible to the gendarmes and makes revolutionaries most accessible to the police), we shall achieve neither the one aim nor the other; we shall not eliminate our rule-of-thumb methods, and, because we remain scattered and our forces are constantly broken up by the police, we shall only make trade unions of the Zubatov and Ozerov type the more accessible to the masses.

What, properly speaking, should be the functions of the organisation of revolutionaries? We shall deal with this question in detail. First, however, let us examine a very typical argument advanced by our terrorist, who (sad fate!) in this matter also is a next-door neighbour to the Economist. *Svoboda*, a journal published for workers, contains in its first issue an article entitled "Organisation", the author of which tries to defend his friends, the Economist workers of Ivanovo-Voznesensk. He writes:

"It is bad when the masses are mute and unenlightened, when the movement does not come from the rank and file. For instance, the students of a

university town leave for their homes during the summer and other holidays, and immediately the workers' movement comes to a standstill. Can a workers' movement which has to be pushed on from outside be a real force? No, indeed.... It has not yet learned to walk, it is still in leading-strings. So it is in all matters. The students go off, and everything comes to a standstill. The most capable are seized; the cream is skimmed and the milk turns sour. If the 'committee' is arrested, everything comes to a standstill until a new one can be formed. And one never knows what sort of committee will be set up next -- it may be nothing like the former. The first said one thing, the second may say the very opposite. Continuity between yesterday and tomorrow is broken, the experience of the past does not serve as a guide for the future. And all because no roots have been struck in depth, in the masses; the work is carried on not by a hundred fools, but by a dozen wise men. A dozen wise men can be wiped out at a snap, but when the organisation embraces masses, everything proceeds from them, and nobody, however he tries, can wreck the cause" (p. 63).

The facts are described correctly. The picture of our amateurism is well drawn. But the conclusions are worthy of *Rabochaya Mysl*, both as regards their stupidity and their lack of political tact. They represent the height of stupidity, because the author confuses the philosophical and social-historical question of the "depth" of the "roots" of the movement with the technical and organisational question of the best method in combating the gendarmes. They represent the height of political tactlessness, because, instead of appealing from bad leaders to good leaders, the author appeals from the leaders in general to the "masses". This is as much an attempt to drag us back organisationally as the idea of substituting excitative terrorism for political agitation drags us back politically. Indeed, I am experiencing a veritable *embarras de richesses*, and hardly know where to begin to disentangle the jumble offered up by *Svoboda*. For clarity, let me begin by citing an example. Take the Germans. It will not be denied, I hope, that theirs is a mass organisation, that in Germany everything proceeds from the masses, that the working-class movement there has learned to walk. Yet observe how these millions value their "dozen" tried political leaders, how firmly they cling to them. Members of the hostile parties in parliament have often taunted the socialists by exclaiming: "Fine democrats you are indeed! Yours is a working-class movement only in name; in actual fact the same clique of leaders is always in evidence, the same Bebel and the same Liebknecht, year in and year out, and that goes on for decades. Your supposedly elected workers' deputies are more permanent than the officials appointed by the Emperor!" But the Germans only smile with contempt at these demagogic attempts to set the "masses" against the "leaders", to arouse bad and ambitious instincts in the former, and to rob the movement of its solidity and stability by undermining the confidence of the masses in their "dozen wise men". Political thinking is sufficiently developed among the Germans, and they have accumulated sufficient political experience to understand that without the "dozen" tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience, and working in

perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle. The Germans too have had demagogues in their ranks who have flattered the "hundred fools", exalted them above the "dozen wise men", extolled the "horny hand" of the masses, and (like Most and Hasselmann) have spurred them on to reckless "revolutionary" action and sown distrust towards the firm and steadfast leaders. It was only by stubbornly and relentlessly combating all demagogic elements within the socialist movement that German socialism has managed to grow and become as strong as it is. Our wiseacres, however, at a time when Russian Social-Democracy is passing through a crisis entirely due to the lack of sufficiently trained, developed, and experienced leaders to guide the spontaneously awakening masses, cry out, with the profundity of fools: "It is a bad business when the movement does not proceed from the rank and file."

"A committee of students is of no use; it is not stable." Quite true. But the conclusion to be drawn from this is that we must have a committee of professional *revolutionaries*, and it is immaterial whether a student or a worker is capable of becoming a professional revolutionary. The conclusion you draw, however, is that the working-class movement must not be pushed on from outside! In your political innocence you fail to notice that you are playing into the hands of our Economists and fostering our amateurism. Wherein, may I ask, did our students "push on" our workers? *In the sense* that the student brought to the worker the fragments of political knowledge he himself possesses, the crumbs of socialist ideas he has managed to acquire (for the principal intellectual diet of the present-day student, legal Marxism, could furnish only the rudiments, only scraps of knowledge). There has never been too much of *such* "pushing on from outside"; on the contrary, there has so far been all too little of it in our movement, for we have been stewing too assiduously in our own juice; we have bowed far too slavishly to the elementary "economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government". We professional revolutionaries must and will make it our business to engage in *this kind* of "pushing on" a hundred times more forcibly than we have done hitherto. But the very fact that you select so hideous a phrase as "pushing on from outside" -- a phrase which cannot but rouse in the workers (at least in the workers who are as unenlightened as you yourselves) a sense of distrust towards *all* who bring them political knowledge and revolutionary experience from outside, which cannot but rouse in them an instinctive desire to resist *all* such people -- proves you to be demagogues, and *demagogues* are the worst enemies of the working class.

And, please -- don't hasten howling about my "uncomradely methods" of debating. I have not the least desire to doubt the purity of your intentions. As I have said, one may become a demagogue out of sheer political innocence. But I have shown that you have descended to demagogy, and I will never tire of repeating that demagogues are the worst enemies of the working class. The worst enemies, because they arouse base instincts in the masses, because the unenlightened worker is unable to recognise his enemies in men who represent themselves, and sometimes sincerely

so, as his friends. The worst enemies, because in the period of disunity and vacillation, when our movement is just beginning to take shape, nothing is easier than to employ demagogic methods to mislead the masses, who can realise their error only later by bitter experience. That is why the slogan of the day for the Russian Social-Democrat must be -- resolute struggle against Svoboda and *Rabocheye Dyelo*, both of which have sunk to the level of demagogy. We shall deal with this further in greater detail. [6]

"A dozen wise men can be more easily wiped out than a hundred fools." This wonderful truth (for which the hundred fools will always applaud you) appears obvious only because in the very midst of the argument you have skipped from one question to another. You began by talking and continued to talk of the unearthing of a "committee", of the unearthing of an "organisation", and now you skip to the question of unearthing the movement's "roots" in their "depths". The fact is, of course, that our movement cannot be unearthed, for the very reason that it has countless thousands of roots deep down among the masses; but that is not the point at issue. As far as "deep roots" are concerned, we cannot be "unearthed" even now, despite all our amateurism, and yet we all complain, and cannot but complain, that the "*organisations*" are being unearthed and as a result it is impossible to maintain continuity in the movement. But since you raise the question of *organisations* being unearthed and persist in your opinion, I assert that it is far more difficult to unearth a dozen wise men than a hundred fools. This position I will defend, no matter how much you instigate the masses against me for my "anti-democratic" views, etc. As I have stated repeatedly, by "wise men", in connection with organisation, I mean *professional revolutionaries*, irrespective of whether they have developed from among students or working men. I assert: (1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organisation of leaders maintaining continuity; (2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously into the struggle, which forms the basis of the movement and participates in it, the more urgent the need for such an organisation, and the more solid this organisation must be (for it is much easier for all sorts of demagogues to side-track the more backward sections of the masses); (3) that such an organisation must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; (4) that in an autocratic state, the more we *confine* the membership of such an organisation to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and who have been professionally trained in the art of combating the political police, the more difficult will it be to unearth the organisation; and (5) the *greater* will be the number of people from the working class and from the other social classes who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it.

I invite our Economists, terrorists, and "Economists-terrorists" [7] to confute these propositions. At the moment, I shall deal only with the last two points. The question as to whether it is easier to wipe out "a dozen wisemen" or "a hundred fools" reduces itself to the question, above considered, whether it is possible to have a

mass *organisation* when the maintenance of strict secrecy is essential. We can never give a mass organisation that degree of secrecy without which there can be no question of persistent and continuous struggle against the government. To concentrate all secret functions in the hands of as small a number of professional revolutionaries as possible does not mean that the latter will "do the thinking for all" and that the rank and file will not take an active part in the *movement*. On the contrary, the membership will promote increasing numbers of the professional revolutionaries from its ranks; for it will know that it is not enough for a few students and for a few working men waging the economic struggle to gather in order to form a "committee", but that it takes years to train oneself to be a professional revolutionary; and the rank and file will "think", not only of amateurish methods, but of such training. Centralisation of the secret functions of the *organisation* by no means implies centralisation of all the functions of the *movement*. Active participation of the widest masses in the illegal press will not diminish because a "dozen" professional revolutionaries centralise the secret functions connected with this work; on the contrary, it will *increase* tenfold. In this way, and in this way alone, shall we ensure that reading the illegal press, writing for it, and to some extent even distributing it, will *almost cease to be secret work*, for the police will soon come to realise the folly and impossibility of judicial and administrative red-tape procedure over every copy of a publication that is being distributed in the thousands. This holds not only for the press, but for every function of the movement, even for demonstrations. The active and widespread participation of the masses will not suffer; on the contrary, it will benefit by the fact that a "dozen" experienced revolutionaries, trained professionally no less than the police, will centralise all the secret aspects of the work -- the drawing up of leaflets, the working out of approximate plans; and the appointing of bodies of leaders for each urban district, for each institution, etc. (I know that exception will be taken to my "undemocratic" views, but I shall reply below fully to this anything but intelligent objection.) Centralisation of the most secret functions in an organisation of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and enhance the quality of the activity of a large number of other organisations that are intended for a broad public and are therefore as loose and as non-secret as possible, such as workers' trade unions; workers' self-education circles and circles for reading illegal literature; and socialist, as well as democratic, circles among *all* other sections of the population; etc., etc. We must have such circles, trade unions, and organisations everywhere in *as large a number as possible* and with the widest variety of functions; but it would be absurd and harmful *to confound* them with the organisation of *revolutionaries*, to efface the border-line between them, to make still more hazy the all too faint recognition of the fact that in order to "serve" the mass movement we must have people who will devote themselves exclusively to Social-Democratic activities, and that such people must *train* themselves patiently and steadfastly to be professional revolutionaries.

Yes, this recognition is incredibly dim. Our worst sin with regard to organisation consists in the fact that by *our primitiveness we have lowered the prestige of*

revolutionaries in Russia. A person who is flabby and shaky on questions of theory, who has a narrow outlook, who pleads the spontaneity of the masses as an excuse for his own sluggishness, who resembles a trade union secretary more than a spokesman of the people, who is unable to conceive of a broad and bold plan that would command the respect even of opponents, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art -- the art of combating the political police -- such a man is not a revolutionary, but a wretched amateur!

Let no active worker take offence at these frank remarks, for as far as insufficient training is concerned, I apply them first and foremost to myself. I used to work in a study circle that set itself very broad, all-embracing tasks; and all of us, members of that circle, suffered painfully and acutely from the realisation that we were acting as amateurs at a moment in history when we might have been able to say, varying a well-known statement: "Give us an organisation of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia !" The more I recall the burning sense of shame I then experienced, the bitterer become my feelings towards those pseudo-Social-Democrats whose preachings "bring disgrace on the calling of a revolutionary", who fail to understand that our task is not to champion the degrading of the revolutionary to the level of an amateur, but to *raise* the amateurs to the level of revolutionaries.

Extracts from the South African Communist Party Constitution

Downloaded from the SACP web site, 3 March 2013

3. AIMS

3.1 The SACP strives to be the leading political force of the South African working class whose interests it promotes in the struggle to advance, deepen and defend the national democratic revolution and to achieve socialism.

3.2 The SACP shall pursue this by means of educating, organising and mobilising the working class and its allies in support of our Party and its objectives of completing the national democratic revolution and achieving socialism.

3.3 The SACP shall strive to win acceptance as a vanguard democratically in ideological contest with other political parties.

3.4 The ultimate aim of the SACP is the building of a communist society in which all forms of exploitation of person by person will have ended and in which all the products of human endeavour will be distributed according to need. The attainment of such a society will require an interim socialist formation in which reward will be measured by contribution.

3.5 At all stages the SACP commits itself to a social order that will respect completely the cultural, language and religious rights of all sections of our society and the democratic rights of the individual. The SACP will recognise the right to independence of all social organisations and political parties that function within the

ambit of South Africa's Constitution. This implies a multiparty political framework in which there will be regular, open and free elections. Within such a framework, the SACP will primarily dedicate itself to advancing the interests of the working class and its allies in democratic contest with other political forces in all spheres of life.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In leading the working class towards national and social emancipation, the SACP is guided by those principles of Marxism-Leninism whose universal validity has been proven by historical experience. The foundations of these principles were laid by Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Lenin and enriched by other great revolutionaries. In applying the general principles of Marxism-Leninism, the SACP is, in the first place, concerned with their indigenous elaboration and application to the concrete realities of our own developing situation. More particularly, the SACP will work to:

4.1 End the system of capitalist exploitation in South Africa and to establish a socialist society based on the common ownership of, participation in, and control by the producers of the key means of production. Such a society will respect and protect all personal non-exploitative property.

4.2 Organise, educate and lead the working class in the struggle for socialism and the more immediate objectives of defending and deepening the national democratic revolution and of achieving national and social emancipation. The main aim of the unfolding national democratic revolution is to complete the national liberation of the African people in particular and black people in general, to ensure the destruction of the legacy of white supremacy, and the strengthening of democracy in every sphere of life. By participating in this revolution, the SACP aims to eradicate patriarchal relations, and weaken and ultimately destroy the economic and political power of the capitalist class through struggle for working class hegemony over society, in particular the ownership and control of the economy and the achievement of one united state of people's power. In this state, working class interests will be dominant and the economic conditions will be created which make it possible to move towards social emancipation and, eventually, the total abolition of the exploitation of person by person in both public and private spheres of life.

4.3 Organise, educate and advance women within the working class, the poor and rural communities in pursuit of the aims of the SACP; and to raise the consciousness of the working class and its allies around the integral and oppressive nature of gender relations within South African capitalism.

4.4 Play a key role in strengthening the revolutionary alliance of all classes and strata whose interests are served by the immediate aims of the national democratic revolution.

4.5 Spread the widest possible understanding of our basic ideology and its application to South African conditions, particularly among the working class.

4.6 Pay particular attention to uniting the different strata of the working class.

4. 7 Combat racism, tribalism, sex discrimination, regionalism, chauvinism, xenophobia and all forms of narrow nationalism.
4. 8 Encourage an ongoing national and international dialogue with all organisations committed to peace, transformation of gender relations, nonracialism, democracy and the preservation of our environment.
4. 9 Promote the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the unity of the workers of South Africa and the world.

5. MEMBERSHIP

- 5.1 Every South African over the age of 16 who accepts the Constitution, aims, guiding principles, policies and programmes of the SACP, undertakes to carry out its decisions and to be active in a SACP structure, pays whatever dues are decided on, and serves a year as an interim member shall be eligible for membership.
- 5.2 The recruiting of members shall be primarily through the branch structures, under the supervision of provincial executive committees, provincial councils, district executive committees and district councils.
- 5.3 A person applying to join the SACP shall be an interim member for 1 year. An interim member shall participate in SACP structures and activities but shall not have the right to vote or be elected to any executive structure of the SACP. To qualify for membership, the interim member has to become familiar with the SACP Constitution and policies, and participate in Party programmes and campaigns. The Branch Executive Committee, or in the case of a new branch, the District Executive Committee or Provincial Executive Committee as provided for in section 21.6, shall confer membership on an interim member
- 5.4 After consultation with PECs, the Central Committee (CC) shall provide guidelines to give effect to the provisions in this Constitution on interim membership.
- 5.5 A person who does not qualify for citizenship or permanent residence in South Africa may be accepted as an associate member if his/her application is accepted by the Central Committee. An associate member shall have full constitutional rights and obligations but may not stand for election as a member of the executive at any level of the SACP.
- 5.6 Any applicant refused admission to membership by a branch including an interim member having served a year in the branch shall have the right to appeal against such a decision to the District Council. Should the appeal fail, the applicant shall have the right to refer such appeal progressively up to the higher structures of the SACP.
- 5.7 All members shall renew their membership on an annual basis in order to remain members of the SACP, and shall remain active in the work of the SACP.
- 5.8 All new members of the SACP shall undergo comprehensive induction training under the direction of the Branch, District and Provincial structures.
- 5.9 Every member has a duty to:
- 5.9.1 Regularly participate in the activities of the SACP and conscientiously implement the policies, decisions and directives of the party.
 - 5.9.2 Study Marxism-Leninism and endeavour to raise his/her level of understanding.

- 5.9.3 Read, engage with and popularise SACP publications.
- 5.9.4 Serve the masses, strengthen ties with them, learn from them, convey their aspirations to the SACP and work in mass organisations within the framework of SACP policies and programmes.
- 5.9.5 Place the interests of the workers and the poor above personal interests.
- 5.9.6 Practice criticism and self-criticism with a view to helping each other and improving individual and collective work.
- 5.9.7 Cultivate comradely relations towards one another and constantly develop a fraternal spirit within the SACP.
- 5.9.8 Act in a manner that is frank, honest and truthful to the SACP and does not betray the interests of the Party.
- 5.9.9 Safeguard the unity and solidarity of the SACP and vigorously defend the interests of the workers and the poor against their opponents.
- 5.9.10 Act in the interests of proletarian internationalism.
- 5.9.11 Act, in his or her personal conduct, in a manner which will bring credit to the SACP and serve as a standard bearer of the highest communist ethic and morality.
- 5.9.12 Observe the SACP Constitution and Party discipline.

5.10 All SACP members who earn above a certain amount, as determined by the CC, shall pay a levy to be determined by the CC from time to time.

5.11 Every person who joins the SACP must pledge as follows:

"I accept the aims and objectives of the SACP and agree to abide by its Constitution and loyally to carry out the decisions of the Party. I shall strive to live up to the ideals of Communism and shall selflessly serve the workers and the poor and the country, always placing the interests of the Party and the workers and the poor above personal interests."

5.12 A member in good standing is one who is paid-up and fulfills the basic requirements set out in this section. The number of years a member has been in good standing does not include the 1 year served as interim member, where applicable.

6. BASIC ORGANISATIONAL PRINCIPLES

6.1 The Party shall function according to the conventional principles of democratic centralism that Communist Parties have traditionally adhered to.

6.2 To secure the unity and cohesion of the SACP, members are obliged to defend the SACP and to carry out its decisions. All decisions taken by higher structures are binding on all lower structures and individual members. Members shall have the right to pursue their views internally in the lead up to conferences or congresses with powers under this constitution to determine or reverse SACP policies. No groupings with their own ideology, theory and discipline shall be permitted.

6.3 All higher structures shall be accountable to lower structures and to the membership in the formulation and implementation of policies and, for this purpose,

shall wherever possible ensure regular and effective consultation with lower structures and the membership prior to the finalisation and implementation of major policies.

6.4 Save as provided for in this constitution, all elected office bearers of the SACP and all structures with the power to formulate and direct SACP policies at any level shall be elected by secret ballot unless a minimum of 75% of the delegates decide otherwise.

6.5 Members active in fraternal organisations or in any sector of the mass movement have a duty to set an example of loyalty, hard work and zeal in the performance of their duties and shall be bound by the discipline and decisions of such organisations and the movement. They shall not create or participate in SACP caucuses within such organisations and the movement designed to influence either elections or policies. The advocacy of SACP policy on any question relating to the internal affairs of any such organisations or the movement shall be by open public statements or at joint meetings between representatives of the SACP and such organisations or the movement.

6.6 Members who are elected to positions at a higher level may not stand for election to positions at a lower level in the SACP. They may serve as ex officio members of immediate lower structures.

6.7 It shall be the duty of delegates to fairly and effectively convey to Congress and policy-making conferences the mandate of the constituency that elected them. However, delegates attending such Congresses and conferences shall not be rigidly bound by these mandates and may discuss and vote on the basis of debates at such Congresses and conferences.

6.8 Employees of the SACP may not serve as elected members of constitutional structures at the same level at which they are employed, but they may serve in an advisory capacity. They may serve on and be elected to SACP structures at lower levels. If an employee of the SACP is elected to a position in the executive of the SACP at the same level, he/she must relinquish his/her original position as an employee of the SACP within a month of being elected.

6.9 All structures of the SACP shall encourage the practice of constructive criticism and self-criticism in party structures.

6.10 In all work and at every level, party structures and members shall ensure that the struggle against patriarchy and for the transformation of gender relations is given due importance, including by the creation of appropriate structures empowered to perform this task. At least one third of all executives of the SACP from branch level to the Central Committee shall be women.

6.11 Executive structures of the SACP shall have the right to co-opt SACP veterans, who shall have non-voting status. Veterans are those who have served the party with distinction for 40 years and more.

6.12 Ex-officio members of SACP structures shall not exercise a vote in those structures.